

1947

BERRIER RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

G.W. KNIGHT, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.

for the twelve months ending

DECEMBER 31, 1947.





KERRIER RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

MEDICAL OFFICER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31st., 1947.

To the Chairman and Members of the Rural District Council.

I beg to present the Annual Report on the Health of the Rural District for the year 1947, your Medical Officer of Health for that period being Dr. T. G. Willis.

As you are aware I only commenced my duties in April 1949, and it is difficult to give other than a general survey on the records at my disposal. However, I have endeavoured to give as interesting and comprehensive report as is possible under the circumstances.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

G.W. KNIGHT.

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VITAL STATISTICS.

Area in acres	...	...	...	...	...	90,839
Estimated Population	...	...	...	...	...	18,510
No. of inhabited houses (December 1947)	...	...	...	...	...	6,570
Rateable Value	...	...	...	...	...	£64,558
Sum represented by penny rate	...	...	...	...	...	£282

LIVE BIRTHS.

		<u>Males</u>	:	<u>Females</u>
	Legitimate	...	160	: 167
	Illegitimate	...	7	: 13
	<u>Totals</u>	...	<u>167</u>	: <u>180</u>
Birth Rate (Live Births per 1,000 estimated mean annual population) ... 18.75				
Birth Rate (England & Wales) ... .. 20.5				



### STILL BIRTHS.

	<u>1947</u>	:	<u>1946</u>	:	<u>1945</u>
		:		:	
Total number of Still Births ...	18	:	6	:	8
		:		:	
Still Birth Rate (per 1,000 population) ...	.95	:	.4	:	.3
		:		:	
Still Birth Rate (England & Wales) ...	.50	:		:	

### BIRTH & DEATH RATES.

Total number of Live Births ...	347
in 1947.	
Total number of Deaths (all ages) ...	322
Excess of births over deaths. ...	<u>+25</u>

### TOTAL MORTALITY.

During the year 322 residents of Kerrier died, of whom 159 were females and 163 were males. Heart disease and cancer were the commonest causes.

	<u>1947</u>	:	<u>1946</u>	:	<u>1945</u>
		:		:	
Death Rate (i.e. deaths per 1,000 : mean annual population) :	17.40	:	16.25	:	13.0
		:		:	
Death Rate (England & Wales) 1947 :	12.0	:	11.5	:	11.6

The comparatively high death rate for the Kerrier Rural District is due to the relatively high proportion of old people resident in the area. Of the 322 deaths during the year, 161 occurred in people over the age of 70 years (i.e. 50% of the total number of deaths).

### DEATHS OVER THE AGE OF 70 YEARS.

<u>Males</u>	:	<u>Females</u>	:	<u>Total</u>
	:		:	
69	:	92	:	161



CLASSIFIED DEATHS FROM ALL CAUSES.							Males	Females	Total
1.	Typhoid & paratyphoid	...	...	...	...	...	-	-	-
2.	Cerebro-spinal fever	...	...	...	...	...	-	-	-
3.	Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	...	...	-	-	-
4.	Whooping Cough	...	...	...	...	...	-	-	-
5.	Diphtheria	...	...	...	...	...	-	-	-
6.	Tuberculosis of Respiratory System	...	...	...	...	...	1	5	6
7.	Other forms of Tuberculosis	...	...	...	...	...	2	2	4
8.	Syphilitic Diseases	...	...	...	...	...	1	-	1
9.	Influenza	...	...	...	...	...	2	2	4
10.	Measles	...	...	...	...	...	-	-	-
11.	Acute Poliomyelitis & Polioencephalitis	...	...	...	...	...	-	-	-
12.	Acute inflammatory encephalitis	...	...	...	...	...	-	-	-
13.	Cancer of buc: cav: & oesoph (Male) Uterus (Female)	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	2
14.	Cancer of stomach & duodenum	...	...	...	...	...	3	7	10
15.	Cancer of Breast	...	...	...	...	...	-	4	4
16.	Cancer of all other sites	...	...	...	...	...	27	13	40
17.	Diabetes	...	...	...	...	...	-	1	1
18.	Intracranial vascular lesions	...	...	...	...	...	21	17	38
19.	Heart Diseases	...	...	...	...	...	55	64	117
20.	Other diseases of circulatory system	...	...	...	...	...	2	8	10
21.	Bronchitis	...	...	...	...	...	5	3	8
22.	Pneumonia	...	...	...	...	...	3	8	11
23.	Other Respiratory Diseases	...	...	...	...	...	2	2	4
24.	Ulcer of stomach or duodenum	...	...	...	...	...	2	-	2
25.	Diarrhoea under 2 years	...	...	...	...	...	-	-	-
26.	Appendicitis	...	...	...	...	...	2	1	3
27.	Other digestive Diseases	...	...	...	...	...	6	-	6
28.	Nephritis	...	...	...	...	...	6	-	6
29.	Puerperal & post abortive sepsis	...	...	...	...	...	-	-	-
30.	Other maternal causes	...	...	...	...	...	-	1	1
31.	Premature Births	...	...	...	...	...	-	-	-
32.	Infant Disease (Congenital malformations & birth injuries)	...	...	...	...	...	2	5	7
33.	Suicide	...	...	...	...	...	3	-	3
34.	Road Traffic Accidents	...	...	...	...	...	4	-	4
35.	Other violent causes	...	...	...	...	...	4	2	6
36.	All other causes	...	...	...	...	...	11	13	24
							Total		322





## INFANT MORTALITY.

Death of infants under one year of age (all causes).

<u>Males.</u>	:	<u>Females.</u>	:	<u>Total.</u>
5	:	8	:	13

Infant mortality rate (1947) per 1,000 live births ... 37.46

Infant mortality rate (1947) (England & Wales) ... 41.0

Since the beginning of this century there has been a gradual decline in the rate of infant deaths, the chief cause of this decline being due to the fall in death rates from congenital debility, bronchitis and convulsions, diarrhoea and enteritis and to a less extent from infectious diseases as a whole. There has been a less appreciable decline, however, in the number of deaths of infants during the first month of life. One of the gravest menaces to the life of an infant is prematurity and moreover stillbirths are approximately ten times as frequent in premature as in full term deliveries. During the year, 18 still births were notified giving a still birth rate of .95 per 1,000 population.

The causes of prematurity are varied. Some may be due to multiple pregnancy and some to toxæmia in the mother, but on the whole the majority are due to causes unknown. It is felt, however, that regular and careful ante-natal care coupled with adequate nutrition in the mother, help to reduce the incidence.

Although many factors - environmental, economic, heredity etc. each play an important and inter related part in determining the chance of an infant surviving the first year of life, it is abundantly clear that education in the welfare and nutrition of babies and the great increase in the knowledge relating to infant care and management have played an important part in producing our present low infant mortality rate. A great deal, however, can yet be done in the realms of parents education as many children are still being exposed unnecessarily to risks of infection because of their parents fatalistic views on the common infectious diseases of childhood.

## MATERNAL MORTALITY.

There was one death during the year directly associated to pregnancy or childbirth but no records are available stating the actual cause.

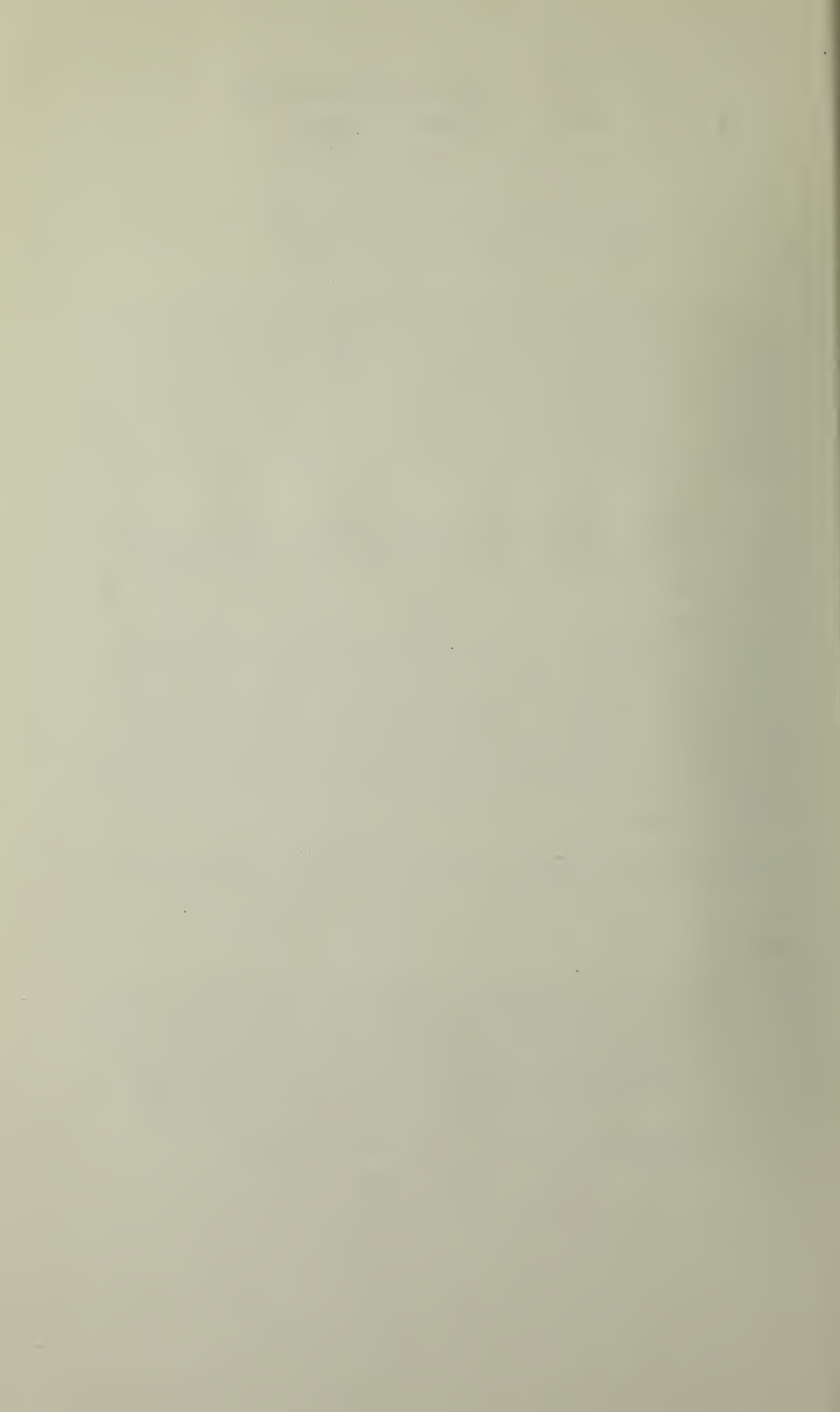
Maternal Mortality Rate (Kerrier) ... 2.7

## CANCER.

During the year, 56 residents of Kerrier died from cancer. Of those deaths 31 occurred in males and 25 occurred in females. Evidence is available that the tendency in this country is for deaths from cancer to occur in later life than formerly, and that the rate appears to be increasing. One of the causes of this apparent increase is due to improved methods of diagnosis and more accurate certification, but after taking these facts into consideration there is little doubt that the increase in the case rate is a real one.

Cancer Death Rate (i.e. deaths per 1,000 population).

<u>1947</u>	:	<u>1946</u>	:	<u>1945</u>
3.0	:	2.7	:	1.7



## PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

### Infectious Diseases notified during the year 1947.

	<u>1947</u>	<u>: 1946</u>
Scarlet Fever .....	19	: 17
Diphtheria .....	1	: 3
Pneumonia .....	5	: 9
Puerperal Pyrexia .....	-	: 1
Ophthalmia Neonatorum .....	1	: -
Typhoid Fever .....	-	: -
Paratyphoid Fever .....	-	: 1
Measles .....	218	: 10
Whooping Cough .....	50	: 40
Cerebro-spinal Fever .....	-	: 1
Tuberculosis .....	9	: 14
		: :
Totals	<u>303</u>	: <u>96</u>

### MEASLES.

As you will have seen from the preceding table the total number of infectious diseases notified during the year was more than triple the number notified during 1946. This is due to the high incidence of measles, a disease probably due to an ultra microscopic virus and often showing itself in epidemic form at roughly two year intervals. During the year 1947 there were 218 children notified as suffering from measles and there were no deaths attributed to this cause. Children under the age of 7 years are mainly affected and the chief cause of mortality is due to secondary infection resulting in bronchopneumonia. During an epidemic period mothers should be warned of the danger of exposing young children to others suffering from colds or catarrh or from any unexplained fever as we have at present no agent which will ensure protection for any child for longer than three weeks.

### SCARLET FEVER.

In this country, Scarlet Fever has assumed a much milder form although unfortunately its prevalence has not diminished. Only in special circumstances is it considered necessary to seek hospitalisation of these cases and the majority are now nursed and isolated at home.

### WHOOPING COUGH.

50 cases of whooping cough were notified during the year 1947, and there were no deaths. Like measles, Whooping Cough is most infective during the early catarrhal phase i.e. before the whoop develops, although in many cases no characteristic whoop may occur. Morbidity is greatest in the under 5 age group, and the mortality rate is highest in the first year of life, some 50% of deaths from this disease occurring during this period. Although a great deal of work is being done to produce a reliable prophylactic vaccine, at present a high degree of protection cannot be guaranteed.

### DIPHTHERIA.

Although only one case of Diphtheria was notified during the year 1947, in contrast to three cases in 1946, and eight cases in 1945, this fact should not be accepted with complacency. Diphtheria is a disease which could be ruthlessly stamped out by an efficient immunisation programme, but until every mother comes to regard immunisation as a milestone in the lives of her infants, this position will never be reached. The evidence that immunisation is an efficient and safe protection against infection is conclusive and as soon as an infant reaches six months of age arrangements should be made either with the family doctor or at the nearest Infant Welfare Clinic for immunisation to be carried out.



Further "Refresher" or "Boosting" doses are usually given to children on entry into school (i.e. about five years of age) and again at nine or ten years of age by arrangement with the School Medical Officers. Owing to the incomplete nature of the records at my disposal it is impossible to give a reliable estimate of the number of children immunised in the Kerrier district.

TUBERCULOSIS.

The total number of cases of tuberculosis in this area at the end of the year 1947 was 123 of which nine cases were new cases notified during the year. There were ten deaths attributed to tuberculosis of which three were males and seven were females giving a death rate of .34 per 1,000 population.

Number of cases on the Tuberculosis Register (December 1947).

<u>Pulmonary</u>		<u>Non-Pulmonary</u>		<u>Total</u>
<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	
50	37	16	20	123

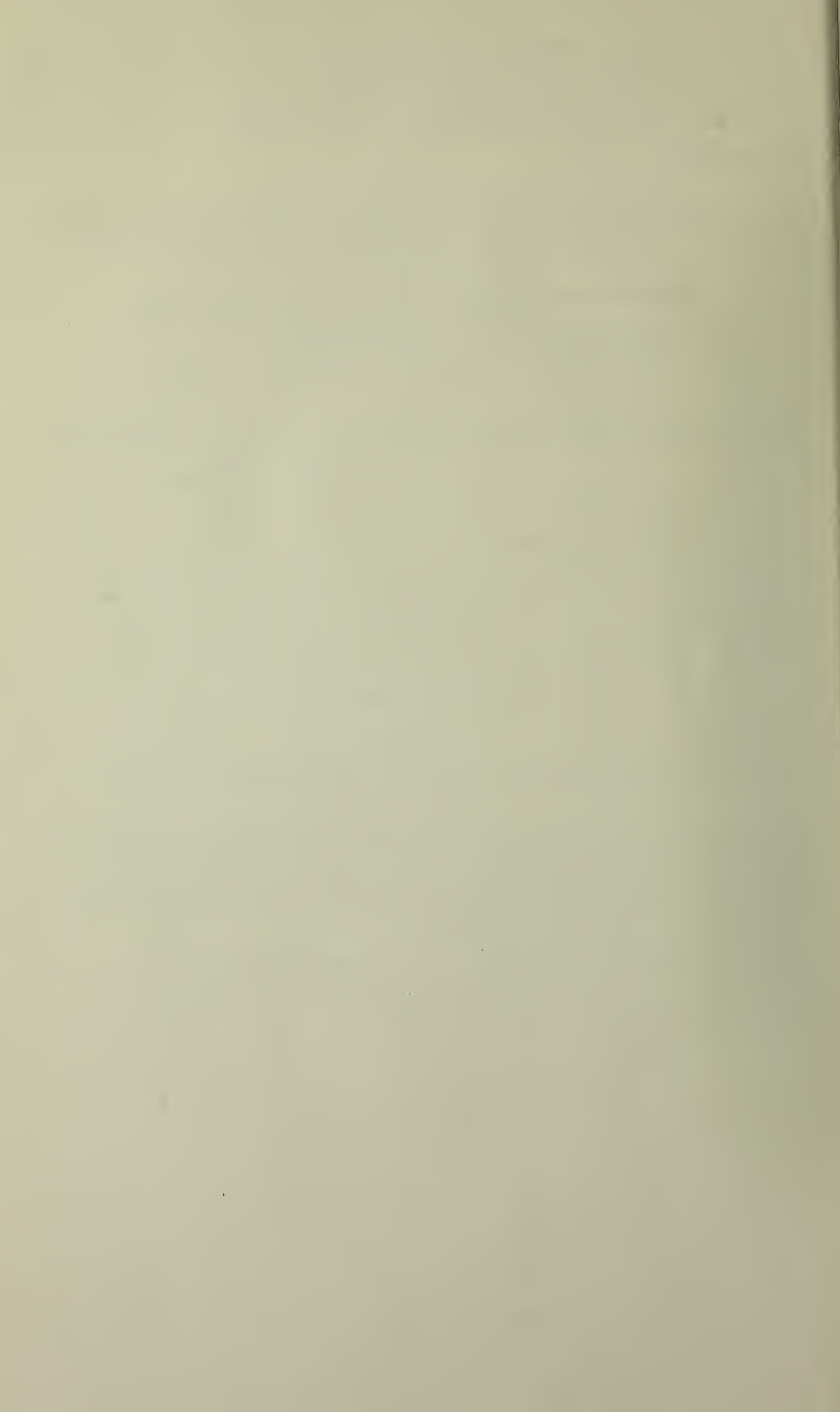
Number of new cases notified during the year 1947 (giving the age distribution).

	<u>* Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
0 - 5 years .....	1	1
5 -15 years .....	1	-
15 - 30 years .....	2	-
30 - 45 years .....	1	-
45 - 60 years .....	1	-
60 and over .....	1	-
<u>Totals</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>1</u>

\* excluding one male suffering from T.B. Meningitis where age was not recorded.

It is very difficult in a disease like Tuberculosis where so many cases remain undetected for long periods to judge its prevalence from the number of notifications, and the mortality rate is often regarded as a good index of our measure of control over the disease. It is interesting to note that during the past 17 years there has been a gradual decline in the death rate from Tuberculosis, not only in this County, but in the Country as a whole.

<u>Year</u>	<u>: Cornwall</u>	<u>: England &amp; Wales</u>
	<u>Death Rate (All Forms)</u>	<u>Death Rate (All Forms)</u>
1931	.85	.88
1933	.80	.80
1935	.64	.70
1937	.64	.67
1939	.58	.62
1941	.54	.70
1943	.61	.61
1945	.56	.56
1947	.52	





The difficulties facing our preventative services are closely allied to the many socio-economic problems of our present day community life e.g. housing, nutrition and hygiene, and it should be emphasised that tuberculosis in the poor will not be stamped out entirely until these environmental conditions are bettered. The second aim of prevention is the isolation of the patient and it is the chronic ambulant infectious person who presents one of our greatest problems. The present lack of sanatorium accommodation in this county, however, limits the intake of tubercular patients and it is to be regretted that very often the recently infected, and it is this type of case which responds more readily to sanatoria therapy, may have to wait for long periods before a bed becomes available. This situation could be eased somewhat by the utilisation of available beds in Fever Hospitals which owing to present day methods of control over infectious diseases are rarely if ever half full.

## SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

I am indebted to your Chief Sanitary Inspector, Mr. Milburn for the following information.

### WATER SUPPLY.

The general position as regards water supply is unsatisfactory due principally to lack of piped mains water supplies throughout the greater part of the area. The greater portion of the public depend on well water of which the quality varies considerably although little trouble has been experienced due to lack of quantity.

All piped water supplies have been bacteriologically examined quarterly with generally good results. The number taken was 30. No samples were taken for chemical analysis, or for Plumbo Solvency,

Parishes in which there is a piped water supply:-

Mullion.  
Landewednack (The Lizard).  
St. Keverne (Coverack).  
Crowan (Looe town & Prazz).  
Sithney (Looe town).  
Mawnan.  
St. Gluvias (Penzance).

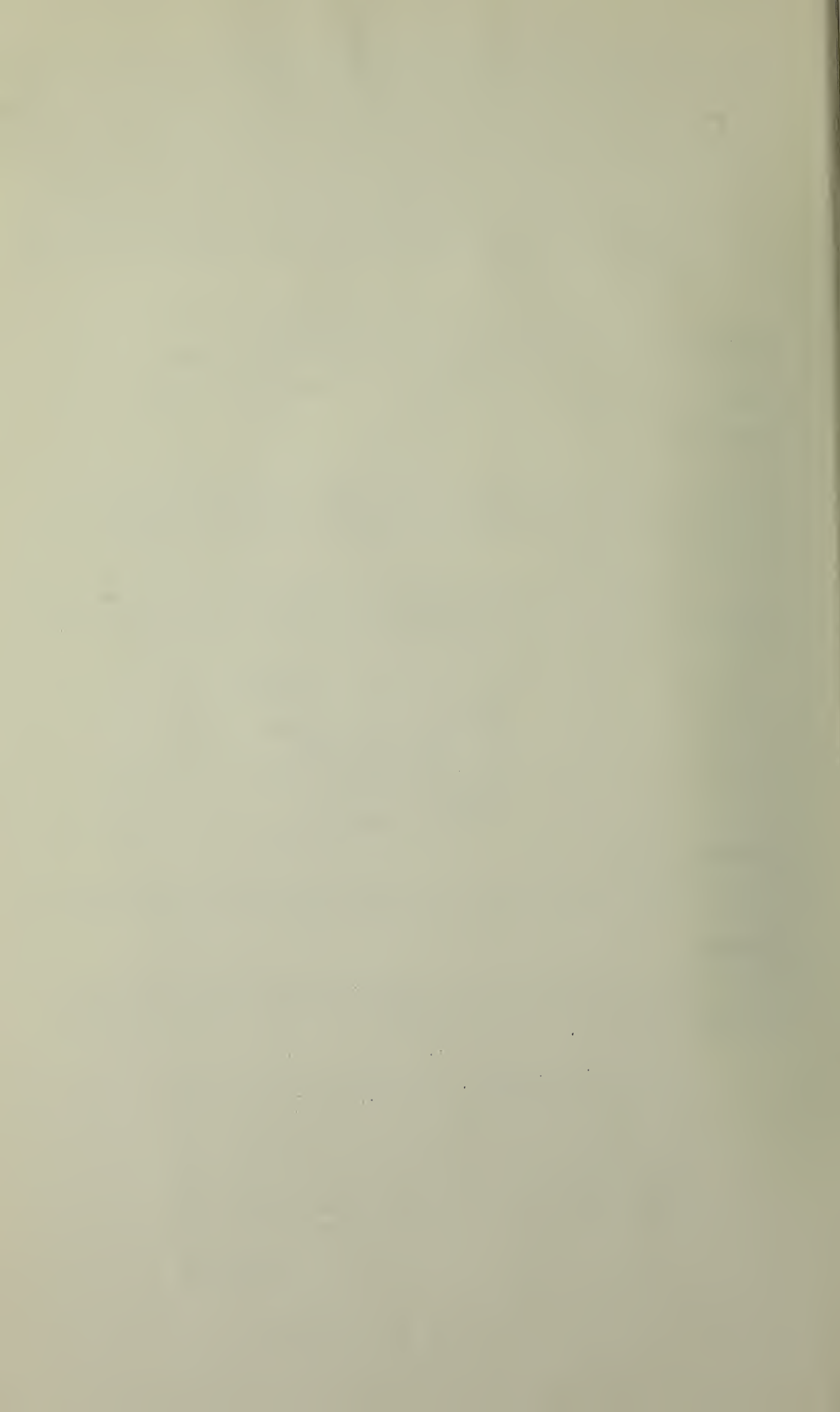
### DRAINAGE & SEWERAGE.

No new works of drainage or sewerage were carried out during the year except an extension to the sewer serving The Lizard.

### COMPLAINTS.

Due no doubt to the lack of piped water supplies and main sewerage throughout the greater part of the District the number of complaints received were rather high and are set out below:-

General Sanitary Choked Drains etc.....	278
Unsatisfactory drainage & sanitation.....	164
Vermineous premises.....	38
Rats & Mice.....	49
Water Supply.....	87
Overcrowding.....	26
Refuse Disposal.....	34
Housing Conditions .....	137
Miscellaneous.....	79
<u>Total</u>	<u>892</u>





## NUISANCES ABATED AND DEFECTS REMEDIED.

The general approach to the question of the abatement of nuisances and remedy of defects has been a personal approach or letter which has in most cases proved effective. Only in cases of complete non co-operation has recourse been made to statutory action which is reflected in the number of notices served.

Details are as under:-

Promises requiring alterations & improvements)	...	146
to drainage systems.	)	
Promises requiring structural alteration & improvements i.e. defective windows, doors etc.)	...	231
Promises requiring improved water supplies	...	34
Miscellaneous nuisances	...	63
Notices served and complied with	...	37

## VERMINOUS PREMISES.

Eight complaints were investigated of which three were found to be groundless. The other five were in relation to fleas, the houses being thoroughly treated by spraying insecticide. Satisfactory results were obtained on each case.

## DISINFECTION OF PREMISES.

Sixteen premises were disinfected after the removal of the patients to Isolation Hospital or termination of home nursing of notifiable infectious diseases. Six houses were disinfected on request by occupants after Cancer and Tuberculosis.

## REFUSE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL.

A fortnightly collection of Refuse was carried out throughout the whole of the District during the period under review. Four Refuse Tips were utilised at Long Downs, Mullion, Looe town and Coverack. Controlled tipping was practised with beneficial results generally. Some trouble was experienced from spontaneous combustion at Long Downs and Mullion which however was not too severe to interfere with normal tipping. The tips were treated quarterly for the control of Rodents, insects etc., with satisfactory results.

## SALVAGE.

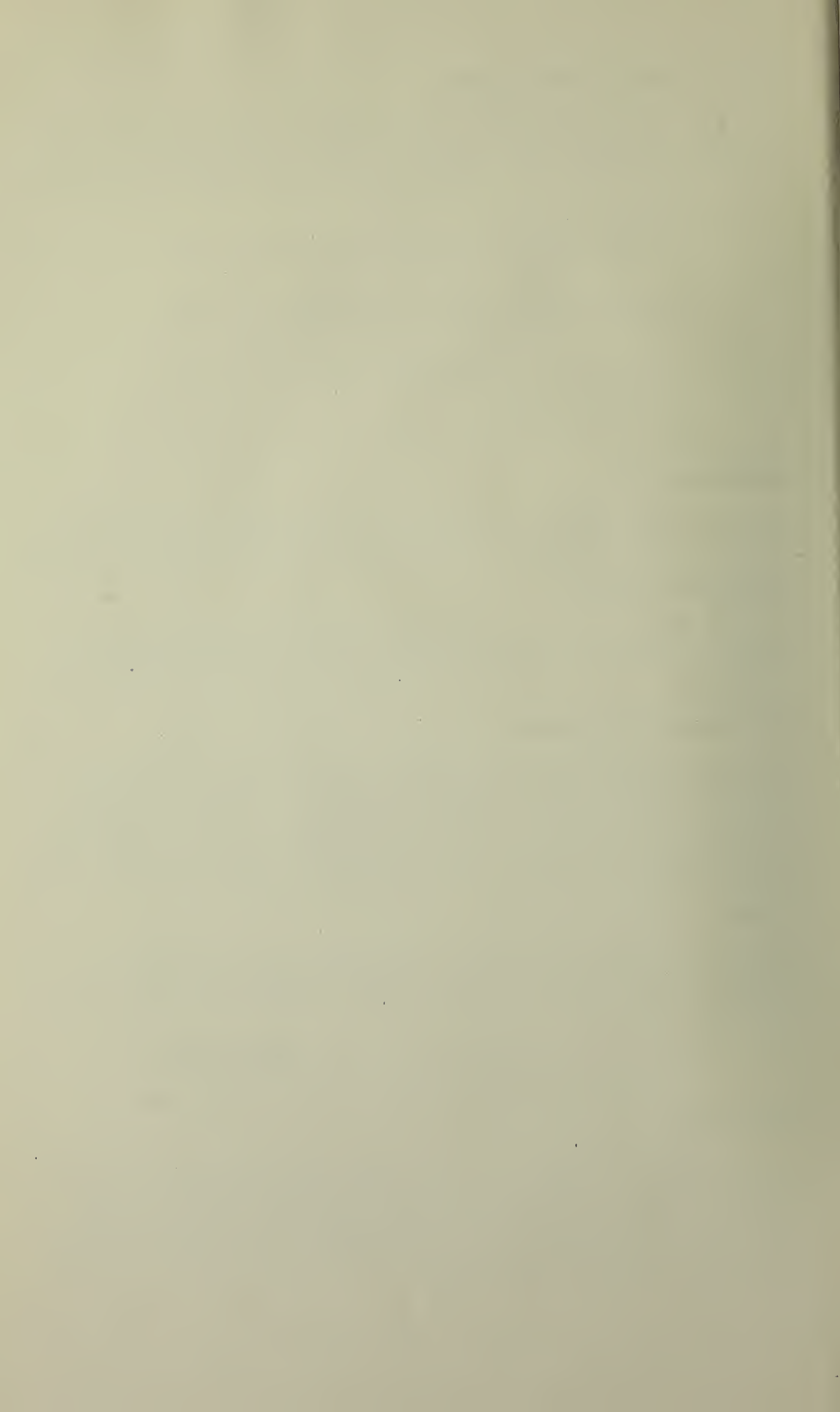
A considerable falling off in the amount of salvage collected and disposed of was experienced during the year, due no doubt to the lack of incentive to collect and the difficulty in cost of collection in a wide scattered Rural Area.

Baled Waste Paper Dispatched ... .. 7 tons 18 cwts.

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## HOUSING.

Some difficulty was experienced during the year in getting necessary repairs carried out to property due to the difficulty in obtaining necessary labour and materials. This shortage was often put forward, and in some cases was quite justified, by owners of property, who were required by requests and notices by the Local Authority to carry out repairs to their property. However, on the whole the difficulties were overcome satisfactorily and owners generally co-operated to the best of their ability.



## INSPECTIONS OF DWELLING HOUSES.

Number inspected for all purposes	...	...	146
Number of inspections	...	...	429
Number in which defects were found	...	...	94
Number of houses in which defects were remedied			83

No action was taken on properties under Section 9, 10 and 16 of the Housing Act 1936.

## OVERCROWDING.

Although a certain amount of overcrowding was investigated during the year, very little action could be taken due to the acute shortage of suitable alternate accommodation. However, records of each case are now filed and a priority given as and when suitable accommodation becomes available.

## RAT & MICE DESTRUCTION.

During the early part of the year a systematic block survey of the whole District was carried out under the auspices of a temporary scheme inaugurated by the Ministry of Food under circular N.F. 12. The feature of this scheme was the first treatment of private or domestic premises on which infestations were found throughout the block survey. A full time Rodent Operative was employed covering the District for convenience was divided into five areas as follows:-

1. Mabe, Budock, Traverda, Constantine, Port Navas, Herman Smith, Gweek.
2. St. Martin, Newtown, Manaccan, St. Keverna, Porthallow, Porthoustock, Coverack.
3. Ruan Minor, Kuggar, Cadgwith, The Linard, Mullion, Cary, Guntrelloc, Garros.
4. Praze, Crowan, Nanecgollan, Brauge, Ashton, Germoe, Prah Sands, Treseowe, Landstorn, Tornshand.
5. Ponsanooth, Stithians, Long Downs, Rann, Carnkie, Portellis, Wendron.

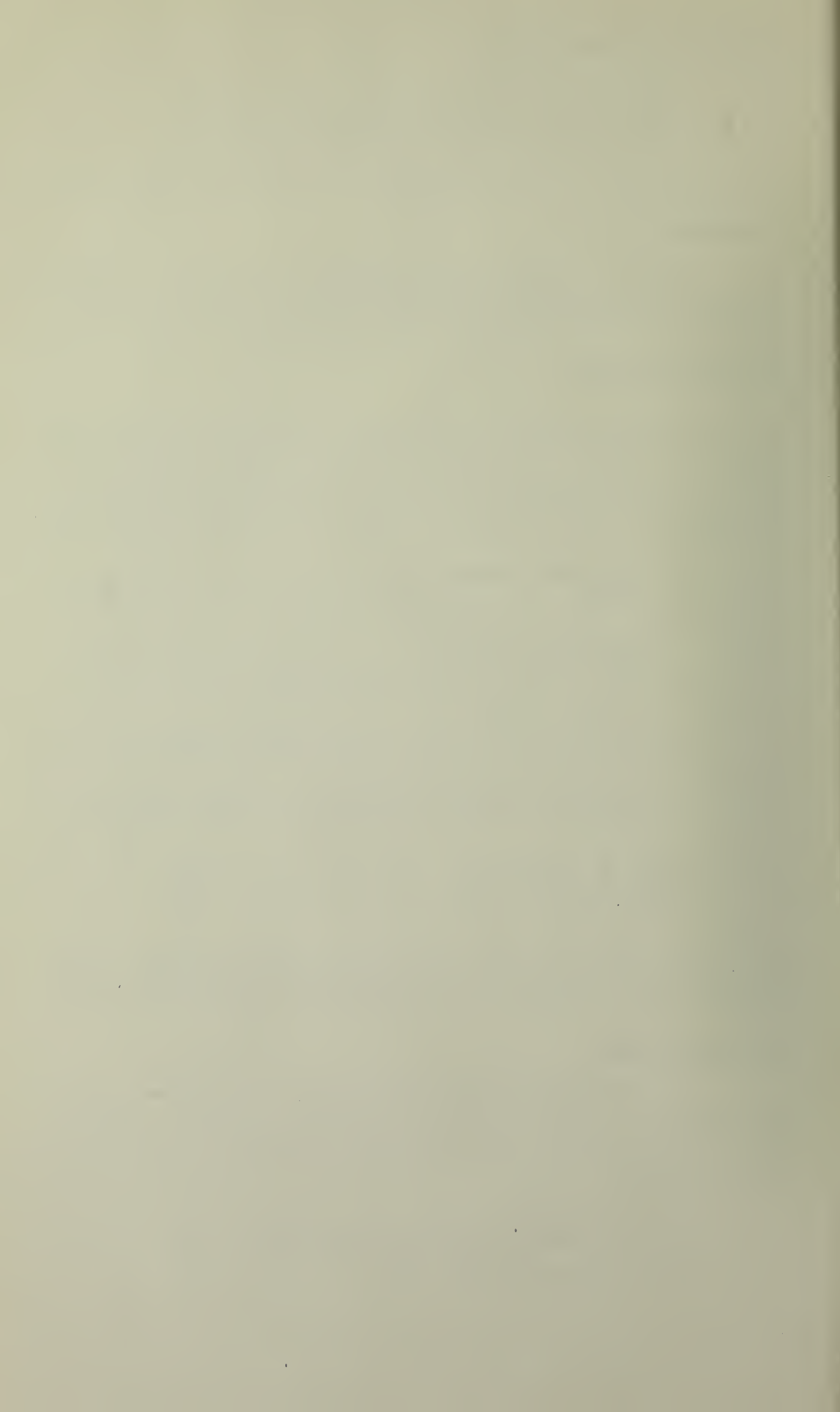
Number of treatments made	...	...	...	142
Number of baiting points	...	...	...	594
Number of bodies recovered	...	...	...	235
Estimated kill	...	...	...	964

The Council's sewers at Mullion and Coverack were treated. In all, twelve manholes were baited but no take was registered in any manhole. These results were very satisfactory and proved the Council's sewers to be clear of rats.

## COWSHEDS AND DAIRIES.

Due to circumstances pertaining at the time it was found necessary to commence a complete survey of cowsheds and dairies in the District. Although this in itself was a considerable task it was steadily tackled and considerable progress was made with the result that records were brought up to date and some progress made in the improvements of the standard of the cowsheds and dairies within the District.

Number of Cowsheds inspected	...	...	289
Number of Cowsheds on which notice was served for improvement.		)	54
Number of notices complied with...	...	...	46



## FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

	<u>No. on</u>	<u>Inspection</u>	<u>Written</u>	<u>Occupiers</u>
	<u>Register</u>		<u>Notices</u>	<u>Prosecuted</u>
Factories in which Sections 1,2,3,4 & 6 are to be enforced by Local Authority.	46	54	Nil	Nil
Factories not included above in which Section 7 is enforced by Local Authority.	82	106	2	Nil
<u>Totals</u>	<u>128</u>	<u>160</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>Nil</u>

One notice was served for the provision of sufficient sanitary conveniences and this was complied with.

## TENTS, VANS AND SHEDS.

The number of Licensed Camping Sites in the District are 14 and are as under:-

Prah Sands	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2 Sites
Mullion	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2 Sites
Ashton, Budock, Edgecombe, Long Downs, Cury, Ruan Minor..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3 Sites
The Lizard (Gilly Gabben)...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	7 Sites

All sites were inspected during the year and the sanitary condition was found to be satisfactory. Number of visits made 32.

Considerable trouble was experienced and many complaints received as to the Gypsy Encampments at Leedstown and Rame Common. Periodic visits were made to the Sites and an endeavour made to keep the sanitary conditions to a reasonable standard. It was noted, however, that as soon as pressure was brought to bear on any particular encampment, this dispersed only to be replaced during the course of a few days by new wanderers. Number of visits made 29.

## INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

### MEAT INSPECTIONS.

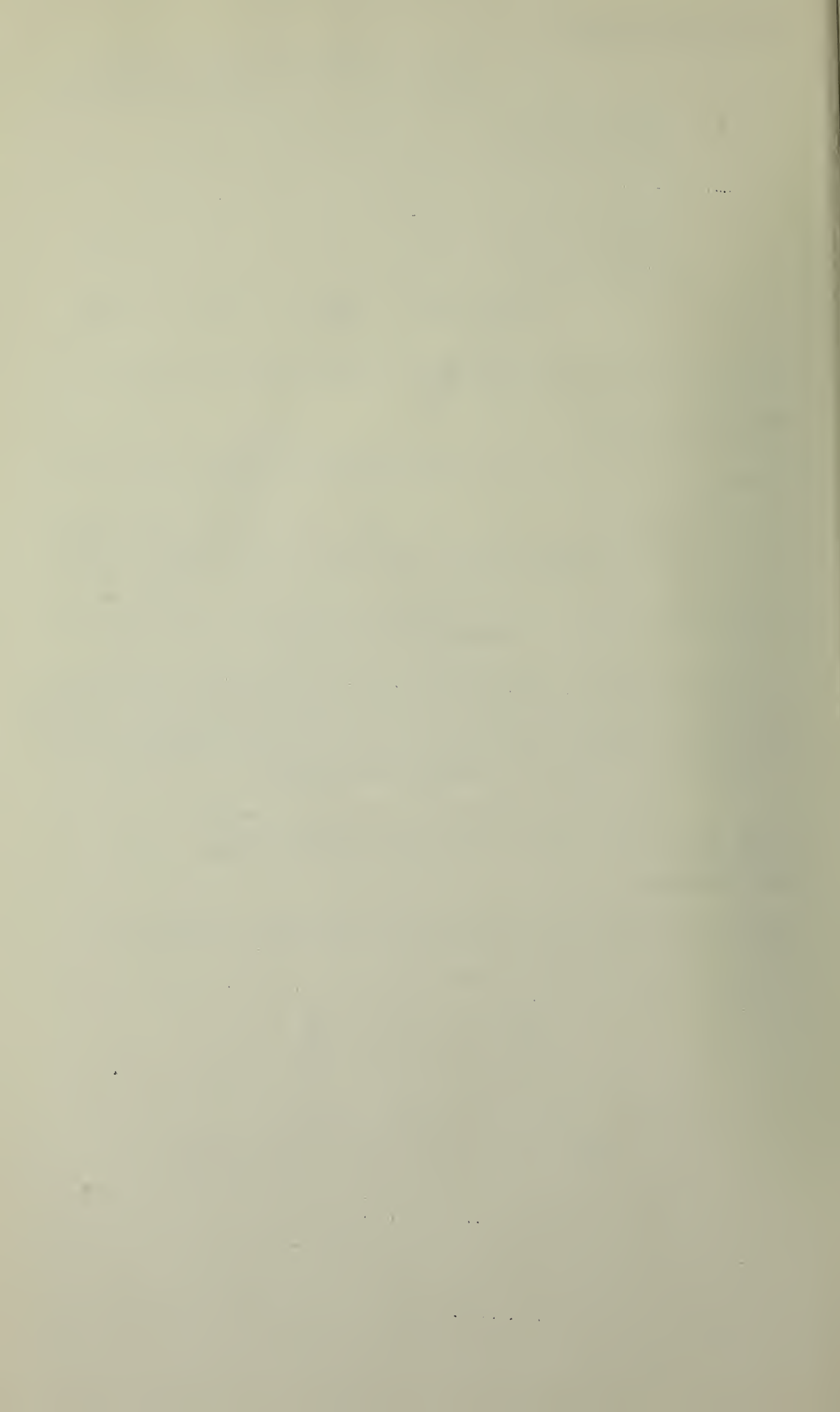
A Ministry of Food controlled slaughter house is situate in the Parish of St. Gluvias and meat inspection is carried out by this Council.

Number of animals slaughtered:-

Calves	589
Cattle	1457
Sheep	3183
Pigs	28

Weights of carcass meat and offal condemned:-

Carcass Meat	14 tons	1 cwt	1 quarter
Offal	7 tons	4 cwt	3 quarters





Also in the area is one Horse slaughtering establishment and one Knackers Yard situated at Cury.

Number of Horses slaughtered .....	156
Number of Horses condemned .....	1
Number of inspections made .....	26

The general conditions of the Knackers Yard was found to be satisfactory.

Number of inspections - 72.

OTHER FOOD CONDEMNED.

Bacon .....	147 lbs.
Wet and Smoked Fish .....	72 lbs.
Tinned Milk .....	176 tins.
Tinned Soups .....	84 tins.
Tinned Meats .....	46 tins.
Tinned Fruit .....	58 tins.

ICE CREAM.

Due no doubt to the introduction of the Ice Cream (Heat Treatment etc.) Regulations 1947, a great deal of concern was created amongst manufacturers of Ice Cream in the District due to the amount and cost of the new equipment which was necessary in order to comply with the Regulations. In order to eliminate some of the difficulties of the various manufacturers each was circularised showing the minimum requirements necessary to comply with the Regulations and then visits were made in order to discuss and assist in the elimination of them. In a number of cases it was found that it was quite impossible to comply with the conditions laid down and in these cases the manufacturers were advised to either secure new premises, or buy their ice cream in bulk from the larger manufacturers who were in a better position to modernise premises and equipment. Although no samples were secured during this period, every effort was made to keep the product clean and in every possible way suitable for the public.

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